The A. F. of L. Weekly News Letter contains a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

Entered as second-class matter [illegible] at the post office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912.
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Sec. 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 11, 1918.

AGITATE !
EDUCATE !
ORGANIZE !

VOL. 8. NO. 40. WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1918. WHOLE NO. 404.

GERMANY UNDERGOING ECONOMIC REVOLUTION

Washington, Dec. 28.—The Star gives the following word picture of the economic revolution going on in Germany:

"As the German revolution proceeds through the stage of reorganization, with reactionary tendencies constantly in evidence, it is important to consider why the people of the former empire sought the overthrow of their governmental system. It was not because they were opposed to kaiserism as a political institution, or because they were particularly indignant at the loss of the war. There was no moral revulsion, no awakening of conscience. The revolution, to state the case plainly, was strictly economic in character. The people were seeking a betterment of physical conditions.

"Much has been heard in recent years of the wonderful efficiency of the Germans, of the kindliness of their government, of the many measures adopted for the welfare and happiness of the people. Little has been heard of the true condition of the millions constituting the body of the nation. It has not been known generally by the citizen of this country, for instance, that the average earnings of the adult male in Germany, shortly before the war, were $310 a year in unskilled and $373 in skilled occupations; that the average cost of living per family was $531.70; that fully a third of the economic labor of the empire was done by women, nearly 10,000,000 of them working; that the average wage of these women was about 55 cents a day; that men and women alike worked on an average 10 to 12 hours daily; that in 1911 more than half a million children worked in the mills, mines and factories at pitifully low wages; that to make up the family budget it was necessary for all members, adults and children, to work at home on "sweat-shop" tasks; that there was such a surplus of labor that, for example, in Baden in 1913 there were 278,910 applications for 163,112 jobs, with an average of 171 applicants for every 100 jobs, and in 1914 there were 273 male candidates for every 100 places.

"The war did not improve these conditions, but actually made them worse. Wages were increased in some employments, but every necessity of life advanced in price disproportionately. More women and children were employed and hours were lengthened. Strikes were frequent. Every factor in the people's daily life pressed on them more harshly."

TO PROTECT UNEMPLOYED.

London, England, Dec. 28.—The ministry of labor has been furnished by the Swiss legation in London with a copy of a decree, dated 5th August, 1918, issued by the federal council, concerning the payment of compensation to workpeople in private industrial undertakings in respect of unemployment resulting from economic conditions arising out of the war.

Where it is necessary to restrict the output of a factory or workshop the employer must, if possible, reduce the length of the working day or in some way reorganize the work rather than discharge his workpeople.

If the time lost owing to such reduction does not exceed five hours weekly, or 10 per cent of the normal working hours, the employer is not required to pay compensation. Should the working day be reduced by an amount which exceeds these limits and yet be not less than 60 per cent of its normal length the employer is required to add to the normal wage for the work actually performed a sum equal to 50 per cent of the wage for the time lost.

When the working hours are reduced to less than 60 per cent of the normal, or when the factory or workshop is closed down, the worker is to receive, in addition to his pay for the time actually worked (if any), compensation for a period equal to 50 per cent of the time lost (after deduction of the 10 per cent referred to above). In this case the provision is made that the total wage paid shall not be less than 60 per cent of the normal full wage, or if the worker is married and has not received public relief, not less than 70 per cent. One-third of the cost of compensation in such cases will be defrayed by the employer, one-third by the canton in which the worker resides, and one-third by the federal government.

The decree makes provision for the settlement of disputes concerning the obligations of employers or the rights of workpeople.

NO RELIEF IN SIGHT.

Washington, Dec. 28.—Retail prices of food for the United States increased 1 per cent from October 15 to November 15, and 18 per cent in the year from November, 1917, to November, 1918, according to reports received from retail dealers by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In the year ended November, 1918, pork chops advanced 26 per cent, roast rib and sirloin steak 28 per cent, round steak, chuck steak and plate beef 30 per cent, while in the month ended November 15 pork chops decreased in price 5 per cent, chuck roast 2 per cent, sirloin steak, round steak, rib roast and plate beef, 1 per cent each.

Lamb, corn meal, potatoes, onions and beans also declined in price during the month ended November 15. Rice, which increased 23 per cent since November, 1917, shows no increase in price for the month ended October, 1918. Lard, bread and flour also remained at the same level as in October. The greatest advances during November, 1918, were in eggs, the increase being 16 per cent; cheese, 5 per cent and milk, 4 per cent.

PROPOSED LABOR BANK.

Seattle, Wash., Dec. 28.—The central labor council's plans for the organization of a banking institution are reported to have been fully matured and the promoters are hopeful of being able to do business in the near future. The new enterprise will be known as the Trades' Union Savings and Loan Association. Its board of directors will be composed of a member from each of the unions holding stock. An effort is being made to interest the grange, farmers' unions and other friendly organizations in the new venture.

EMPLOYMENT FURNISHED.

Washington, Dec. 28.—In its report on the part it is playing in restoring war workers and discharged soldiers to peace-time industry, the United States employment service announced that during the week ended December 7, jobs were found for 84,284 applicants who registered. Women registrants numbered 17,350, and of these 12,859 were placed.

WAR BOARD REBUKES N. Y. BOAT OWNERS

New York, Dec. 28.—Because associations representing harbor boat owners refused to submit to arbitration a dispute with their employes regarding pay and working hours was rebuked by the national war labor board, which overruled their claim that the New York harbor wage adjustment board, created under an agreement with their men, had gone out of existence with the signing of the armistice.

The war labor board dismissed the contention of the employers that its functions ceased with the signing of the armistice. The secondary plea of the boat owners that the wage adjustment board had been dissolved by resignation of some of its members was denied, and advised that immediate steps be taken to fill the vacancies.

Consequently, they stated, both employers and employes were bound by their agreement of May last to submit throughout the war all differences to the wage adjustment board, citing, in emphasizing the urgency of such action, "the necessity of food being shipped to Europe for the civilian populations and for our forces under arms across the sea."

Previous to the reading of the decision by Mr. Taft, the boat owners announced that they were willing to arbitrate the wage question, but not before the wage adjustment board, which they considered "without authority." A basic eight-hour day, they asserted, was impracticable for harbor craft.

The owners' delegates left the conference without any intimation as to whether their attitude had been changed by the war labor board's decree.

Unless the expressed determination of the boat owners is modified and they agree to conform to the action of the joint chairman of the war labor board a strike of the harbor workers is apparently inevitable. To force such action at the present time would seriously hamper the shipment of necessary supplies to Europe to relieve the food shortage there.

STEEL'S BREAKING POINT.

Cincinnati, Dec. 28.—John P. Frey, editor of the International Molders' Journal, says the breaking point of steel or other metal is kept in mind by engineers who never test this limit. The trade unionist intimates that the laws which apply to the resistance of steel may also apply to the resistance of the worker's vitality to the strain of labor.

"The breaking point of structural steel," he says, "is a strain of about 65,000 pounds to the cubic inch; the engineer, however, is not governed by the breaking point. He is particularly interested in discovering what is known as the elastic limit.

"When more than 35,000 pounds' strain is placed upon a cubic inch of this steel the elastic point is passed and a structural change takes place in the steel. It no longer has the power of returning to its original shape when the strain of the testing machine is released.

"The engineer, however, does not accept the elastic limit as the factor of safety required, but bases his plans so that a strain of not more than 17,000 or 18,000 pounds per cubic inch is to be placed upon the steel. In other words, roughly, if the breaking point of a cubic inch of steel is 65,000 pounds the margin of safety which an engineer would allow to be placed upon the steel when used is about one-fourth of that amount, and very careful inspection must be made of all the steel used to see that it is of equally high grade with the samples tested.

"In softer metals, those of less resiliency or elasticity, such as copper, tin or lead, the elastic limit is reached much sooner."

HOPEFUL VIEW OF FUTURE.

Washington, Dec. 28.—Secretary of Labor Wilson in sending out his Christmas greeting takes a very hopeful view of the future. He says:

"Christmas of this year dawns upon a nation that has done its duty, that has met the greatest task in the country's history and has bravely fulfilled that task. All the people in the year now coming to a close have been called upon to sacrifice, and they have given fervid response. The nation's industries and the nation's workers have been put to the highest test in skill and stamina. They have been true to their trust.

"The coming year smiles upon a new era—an era in which the people's will controls their destinies, an era in which liberty rests upon justice, an era in which might bows before the force of right.

"It bids us forget the price we have paid for the freedom we have won; to shape our course of life to meet the grave trust which universal liberty imposes upon our people; to turn our thoughts to the glories of the nation's future.

"It gives vigor to the generous spirit which stirred this nation in the trying time of war. It binds all mankind in a firmer fellowship. It greets a universe that has been united by a common purpose.

"The world has sorrowed long enough. The past is behind us. Let us meet it with hope and courage."

STRIKE TO GAIN INCREASE.

St. Louis, Mo., Dec. 28.—The commercial members of Photo-Engravers' union No. 10 were compelled to force the issue by striking when the employers refused an increase. The cessation of work was of short duration. The new agreement runs for a period of three years. It raises the scale of wages from $28 to $35 and stipulates a 44-hour week, to go into effect January 1, 1920. Back pay from December 1 is also provided for. Other improvements are stipulated and the agreement is regarded as satisfactory by all concerned.

DISPUTES ADJUSTED.

Washington, Dec. 28.—Ten new strikes and twenty-three industrial disputes were brought to the attention of the division of conciliation during last week. Seven cases, including four of the strikes, were adjusted; 22 are pending, and 4 are reported unclassified. During the same period 26 cases previously reported were adjusted. These affected about 12,000 workmen.

FORM STATE BODY.

Nashville, Tenn., Dec. 28.—Postal employes of the state held a most successful mass meeting. Representatives from all sections of the state were present. A permanent organization to be known as the Tennessee state association of postal employes was formed. The purpose of the new organization is to better the postal service and the working conditions of postal employes.

A. F. OF L. RECONSTRUCTION PLAN

Washington, Dec. 28.—The conventions of the American Federation of Labor, held since the declarations of war in 1914, instructed the executive council to call a labor peace conference of all nations at the time and place the peace conference is held by the belligerent nations, and that at least five delegates—one of whom shall be the president of the American Federation of Labor—be selected to participate in this conference.

The executive council selected Samuel Gompers, James Duncan, John R. Alpine, Frank Duffy and William Green to represent the American labor movement. It is expected that they will sail early next month for Paris.

The labor mission, composed of Samuel Gompers, John P. Frey, Charles L. Baine, William A. Bowen and Edgar Wallace, which visited England, France and Italy, attended the inter-allied labor conference held at London, September 17, 18, 19, 1918. The conference declared that in the official delegations from each of the belligerent countries which will formulate the peace treaty, the workers should have direct official representation; it also declared in favor of a World Labor Congress to be held at the same time and place as the peace conference that will formulate the peace treaty.

The American delegation submitted the following fundamental principles to the inter-allied conference, based upon the declarations of the conventions of the American Federation of Labor, which must underlie the peace treaty, in order that the sacrifices which were made to safeguard and realize for the peoples of all nations the benefits of democracy shall not have been in vain:

1. A league of the free peoples of the world in a common covenant for genuine and practical co-operation to secure justice and therefore peace in relations between nations.
2. No political or economic restrictions meant to benefit some nations and to cripple or embarrass others.
3. No reprisals based upon purely vindictive purposes, or deliberate desire to injure, but to right manifest wrongs.
4. Recognition of the rights of small nations and of the principle, "No people must be forced under sovereignty under which it does not wish to live."
5. No territorial changes or adjustment of power except in furtherance of the welfare of the peoples affected and in furtherance of world peace.

In addition to these basic principles there should be incorporated in the treaty which shall constitute the guide of nations in the new period and conditions into which we enter at the close of the war, the following declarations fundamental to the best interests of all nations and of vital importance to wage-earners:

1. That in law and in practice the principle shall be recognized that the labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce.
2. Involuntary servitude shall not exist except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.
3. The right of free association, free assemblage, free speech and free press shall not be abridged.
4. That the seamen of the merchant marine shall be guaranteed the right of leaving their vessels when the same are in safe harbor.
5. No article or commodity shall be shipped or delivered in international commerce in the production of which children under the age of 16 years have been employed or permitted to work.
6. It shall be declared that the basic workday in industry and commerce shall not exceed eight hours per day.
7. Trial by jury should be established.

CHILDREN STARVING IN NEW YORK CITY

New York, Dec. 28.—A representative of the Associated Press is responsible for the startling revelations which follow, distressing and almost unbelievable as they appear at this season of the year when all people are anticipating pleasurable enjoyment during the holiday season:

Aroused by reports that, with Christmas approaching, East Side children are "fainting in school rooms and dying at home," because their parents cannot pay the prevailing high prices for milk and staple foods, representative citizens organized a committee "to feed them first and investigate afterward."

A plea that something be done for her pupils, who were "slowly starving to death," was made recently by a teacher to a banker, who now heads the relief organization. He visited schools, hospitals and tenements, and issued a statement dealing with conditions on the East Side.

"One settlement," he said, "has the names of 150 babies, who recovering from influenza, now face death from pneumonia because their parents cannot buy milk needed to restore them to health. Every hospital in the district," he continued, "knows hundreds more underfed children, many of whom are physically unable to continue their studies."

Of his visit to one school, he said:

"In one room there were 22 children. A ragman would not have paid five cents for all the clothing they wore. Many had no undergarments, and those who did could hardly call them by that name. Many were without shoes, and others had heelless and soleless ones.

"We learned most of them came there without any breakfast. Some kind people were giving the teacher a little money every week, and with that she purchased some milk and cereals, preparing gruel over a small stove in the room. She said with the high cost of milk now she was not able to buy much and that several of the children had fainted right there in the class room. Others were too weak to leave home and died there. Malnutrition was the cause—starvation."

PRESSMEN'S GAINS.

Pressmen's Home, Tenn., Dec. 28.—Additional increases in wages have been reported by the International Printing Press and Assistants' Union from a number of cities.

In New York City Web Pressmen's Union No. 25 was awarded an increase of $6 a week for men in charge and journeymen, $4.50 to $7.50 for junior pressmen, retroactive September 1. This makes the wages for men in charge $6.50 a day, for journeymen $5.50 a day, with an additional dollar for Saturday night. Juniors will receive $2.50 a day with additional 50 cents for Saturday night. The national war labor board also awarded a $6 a week increase to the members of Assistants' Union No. 23, making the wages for cylinder feeders $30 a week.

Web pressmen of Seattle, Wash., received an additional war bonus of $3 a week, bringing wages up to $7.50 a day for foremen, $6.50 for men in charge of press and $6 for journeymen.

Cylinder pressmen in Rochester, N. Y., received an increase of $6 a week, as did the members of Hudson County Web Pressmen's Union, the cylinder pressmen of Pittsburgh, Pa., and of Racine, Wis.

In Cleveland, Ohio, Pressmen's Union No. 56 were granted an additional increase on their minimum of $28.50, making a minimum scale of $31 a week for cylinder pressmen. This represents a total increase in one year of $10. The Assistants' local at the same time received an increase of $5 a week making their scale $24 for cylinder feeders and $18 for platen feeders.

SHIPPING BOARD FORMED.

Washington, Dec. 28.—The United States shipping board, just formed, announces that beginning with the new year, crews for all merchant vessels operated by the board will be placed in employment through a central agency to be known as the sea service bureau of the United States shipping board.

This agency will have offices in the principal American ports, and through it all seamen will be signed for sea duty. Vessels privately operated will have the privilege of shipping crews through the bureau. In addition to placing experienced seafarers in employment, the new bureau will ship out to sea for duty all the graduates of the shipping board's training system.

BUTCHERS WIN EIGHT HOURS.

Bakersfield, Cal., Dec. 28.—The Butchers' union here has just signed a new scale agreement that concedes them the eight-hour day. It is asserted that this is the first butchers' union in the United States to secure that recognition. The agreement also provides that no Japs or Chinese are to be hired in the butcher shops.

LONG WORKING HOURS MEANS LESS PRODUCTS

Washington, Dec. 28.—In a pamphlet issued by the United States public health service it is shown that the claim that less hours means less production is untrue.

The pamphlet contains a study on industrial fatigue by a committee of the council of national defense.

"It is obvious," report the investigators, "that a man can do more work in two hours than in one hour; but it does not necessarily follow from this that he can do more in 12 hours than in 10 or more in 10 hours than in eight. In fact, whenever the work is of such duration that fatigue begins to be pronounced, it has been shown again and again that shortening the working period actually increases the amount of work done. This may not always be evident in the first few weeks, but it appears later.

"Innumerable instances of this might be quoted. Thus a certain granite-cutting company found that the same man under identically the same conditions accomplished more of exactly the same kind of work when he was working nine hours than he did when he was working 10 hours. And again when the hours were reduced to eight this same man accomplished still more in an eight-hour day than he did in a nine-hour day, or a considerable amount more than he did when the day was 10 hours long.

"In an English munitions factory when the average weekly hours of men sizing fuse bodies were reduced from 58.2 to 51.2 the total output was increased 21 per cent."

FAVORS CHILD LABOR TAX.

Washington, Dec. 28.—The senate has approved a bill assessing a tax of 10 per cent on child labor by a vote of 50 to 12. The minority vote was cast by southern democrats. The new amendment was drawn after the decision of the supreme court invalidating the previous law and has the approval of the president. It provides that those who employ child labor "shall pay for each taxable year, in addition to all other taxes imposed by law, an excise tax equivalent to 10 per centum of the entire net profits received or accrued for such year from the sale of the products of such labor." The labor of children is prohibited in certain industries under 16 years and in others as low as 14. The action of the senate is apparently a disapproval of the nullification by the supreme court of the previous child labor law.

Senator Lenroot, in speaking on the amendment, said: "Take away the incentive of profit and the practice will be abandoned." He read from President Wilson's address urging that taxation be utilized to stamp out profiteering and said his recommendation was being followed. This is one method of reaching the profiteers. The amount of revenue resulting from the amendment may be nominal. The main purpose of this legislation is to stop a very great evil and throw around the children a protection that will insure us of a more vigorous and healthy progeny.

TIMES ARE CHANGING.

Los Angeles, Cal. Dec. 28.—This city has boasted of the fact that it is an open shop city where the newspaper editorials are inspired by the advertisements and the advertisers are controlled by the merchants' and manufacturers' association, whose only legitimate excuse for existence is to circumvent the organization of labor unions, increase hours and reduce pay of the wage earner. Recently the worker has been aroused to the danger by which he is surrounded and is moving along on safe and sane lines at a rate of speed hardly to be believed by the doubting Thomases in and out of the ranks of organized labor. The fact has been brought home to the more astute business men of the city that a $6 a day worker is more profitable to the interests of the city than a $3 a day man; and also that the Saturday half holiday has increased the buying opportunities of the wealth producers by giving them more time to make their purchases.

CLERKS FEDERATED.

Waco, Tex., Dec. 28.—Thirty-three lodges of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks representing the southwestern section met here and formed an organization to be known as the Southwestern Federation of Railway Clerks. The delegates present represented a membership of over 10,000. R. J. Morgan of Dallas was chosen permanent chairman and J. R. Hooper of Houston secretary. Houston boasts of over 1,000 members and other locals reported that they were close seconds.

WEAR UNION BUTTONS.

York, Pa., Dec. 28.—The members of the newly-organized union of street car men are all wearing their union buttons and are proud of the much treasured ornament. It required a long contest to secure that privilege.

WILL THIS CONDITION VISIT OTHER CITIES?

New York, Dec. 28.—Police investigation confirms reports by private agencies of suffering among many families of the lower east side, with especial reference to young children, says the World. To some extent these hardships appear to be due to the inability of the people to buy milk at present prices, but the high cost of all foods is mainly responsible.

If the situation is as desperate as is indicated, it is grossly improper to leave it wholly to the interminable milk inquiry now in progress. That investigation is legal and economic in its scope. Starving babes and children fainting from hunger in a land of plenty where generosity has no limit present a question of humanity not to be ignored.

New York has been lavish in its gifts to every charitable and patriotic cause. Many of its people have been wearied, no doubt, by the frequent appeals to their hearts and purses, but even so, there must always be something left for the succor of the wretched at [illegible] own doors. The privations of infancy and childhood in particular cannot fail to command the sympathy and assistance of the compassionate.

To relieve misery of this description it is only necessary that there should be organization. Which one of our many charitable societies will make this work its own and carry relief measures to success in New York's war-famished districts?

WORKERS' FIGHT NOT OVER.

Kansas City, Mo., Dec. 28.—President Bryan, of the United Leather Workers' International union, warns members of that organization that the millennium is not just over the hill, even though the kaiser has been defeated.

"A victory for industrial democracy would bestow greater benefits than all other victories combined," writes the trade unionist in the Leather Workers' Journal.

"While democracy in government is a step in the right direction, it is only a step in the direction of true democracy; no peoples are free where the many are dependent upon the few for their daily bread; industry should bring its own reward for its face value, not a limited reward to the degree some autocrat might in charity feel disposed to distribute as a wage to those who produce all.

"But the wage earners should not become inflated or deceived with an idea that they are coming into their own, unless they fully realize what is necessary on their part to gather the fruits of victory. The employers are no more generous, or has true democracy overtaken them; they will be just as exacting in the future as they have been in the past; it remains for the wage earners to impress upon the employers the fact that they have decided to take a hand in the division of the proceeds and will not accept one cent less than a full return."

RETURN ARRANGED FOR.

Washington, Dec. 28.—No more permits for the importation of Mexican and West Indian labor will be granted and permits already granted will be void after January 15. Aliens permitted previously to enter temporarily for war work will be returned gradually.

Porto Ricans are not classified as war emergency labor. The immigration law does not apply to them, and there are other reasons than war emergencies involved in their admission. No change of policy is made with respect to them.

Mexican farm laborers already in this country may remain for the present crop season, the date of their return to be hereafter determined.

The department of labor aims to bring about a total abrogation of war emergency labor permits, but feels that as to such for whose admission permission has been given this must be achieved gradually, and sufficient notice given so that no just cause for complaint may arise.

RAILWAY CLERKS UNITING.

Cleveland, O., Dec. 28.—As the result of an active campaign the railway clerks here are joining the several new union by the scores. It is purposed to continue active work until those still outside will be included in the new unions. Already five new union have been formed. These are composed of clerks employed by the Pennsy, Erie, New York Central, Big Four and the B. & O. A meeting has been called to line up the Nickel Plate clerks.

OPPOSES U. S. OWNERSHIP.

Philadelphia, Dec. 28—Government supervision of public utilities rather than public ownership, which he characterized as "clumsy," was advocated by Dr. Harry A. Garfield, United States fuel administrator, in an address recently before the American academy of political and social science. The fuel administrator said that a certain but not too pronounced deliberation in the shifting from government control to private ownership is necessary.

U. S. SUPREME COURT AFFIRMS SEAMAN LAW

Washington, Dec. 28.—The United States supreme court partly affirmed decisions of the lower courts abolishing important provisions of the La Follette seamen's act.

The law, which was passed for protection of seamen, provided that a sailor could demand half his wages at any American [illegible], and if they were refused he could libel the vessel. Action of the court clearly restricts the privilege to Americans.

Advances to seamen were prohibited, and it was made unlawful to give compensation to a third party for finding employment for a sailor. All these provisions were applied to foreign vessels touching American ports as well as vessels of American registry.

The attack on the law was taken to the United States supreme court in four separate suits, in which the government intervened on behalf of sailors who had been denied redress in lower courts on the grounds that the master of a foreign vessel could not be forced to pay half a sailor's wages on demand.

DEMAND 44-HOUR WEEK.

London, Dec. 28.—Labor unions throughout the United Kingdom are agitating for a 44-hour week. This would mean eight hours a day on five days of the week and four hours on Saturday.

The National Transport Workers' federation has presented to all the municipal and privately-owned tramways a demand for a working week of 44 hours at the present weekly wages.

Representatives of the federation of engineering and shipbuilding trades and representatives of the employers recently held a meting at which it was decided that a 44-hour week without any reduction in existing wages constituted a reasonable attempt to readjust working conditions. An agreement was entered into between the employers and the men providing that the unions should make all effort to insure that in the unsettled state through which the country has to pass, the greatest possible output should be maintained.

The compromise of a 44-hour week has been passed upon by the engineering and shipbuilding union and a count of the ballot shows it was accepted by 286,545 to 146,526.

BURLESON HOSTILE.

Washington, Dec. 28.—Postmaster General Burleson reaffirms his hostility to the postal employes' organizations in his report to Congress. His last year's report is as follows:

"The conduct of these organizations at this time is incompatible with the principles of civil service and with good administration of the postal service. They are fast becoming a menace to public welfare, and should no longer be tolerated or condoned. It is earnestly recommended that the provision in the act of August 24, 1912 (giving employes the right to petition Congress and to affiliate with the A. F. of L.), be repealed."

There is no reason to anticipate that Congress will give heed to the demand of the Postmaster General that the postal employes shall be deprived of their statutory right of associating together for their mutual betterment.

MUST BE PROTECTED.

Washington, Dec. 28.—In the era of industry that is to follow the war women as an economic factor are to be considered as never before. In the old tasks the government demands that they shall have proper working conditions, and in the new occupations that they shall be introduced on the right basis.

This policy stated clearly in regard to wartime problems by the Secretary of Labor will hold good during the reconstruction period. In his annual report the secretary says:

"Women's work must be made more healthful and more productive by the establishment of better conditions in their accustomed work, and the conditions of their employment in new occupations must be determined and established on the right basis. All this must be accomplished without lowering standards already attained."

CLARKSON HEADS COUNCIL.

Washington, Dec. 28.—Grosvenor B. Clarkson, of New York, has been elected director of the council of national defense to succeed W. S. Gifford, who recently resigned to return to private business. Mr. Clarkson has been secretary of the council throughout the war. Reports indicate that the various state council units are loyally holding together and are co-operating with the government in its demobilization plans.

UNION MAN ELECTED JUDGE.

Berkeley, Cal., Dec. 28.—James J. Jerome, a member of the Musicians' union, was elected judge of the county superior court at a recent election to fill the short term.

URGING THE RELIEF OF AN ACUTE SITUATION

Portland, Oreg., Dec. 28.—O. R. Hartwig, president of the Oregon State Federation of Labor, is in Washington to present the matter of unemployment resulting from the cancellation of contracts for the construction of wooden ships. The cancellations affect the construction of 27 ships in Oregon alone. Many of these ships have been partly constructed, and for practically all of them subcontracts have been let and the materials for same are on the ground. Almost all of this material can be used for no other purposes than that for which it was prepared. Hence most of it will be wasted unless the ships are finished. The cancellation order came as a surprise to all, especially the workers, who were entirely unprepared for a protracted period of unemployment. A very acute and dangerous situation has developed, therefore, in Oregon. And something must be done to relieve it.

The labor movement of Oregon feels that in view of the unemployment phase of the question, and the fact if the ships for which contracts have been let are finished some can be held and disposed of by our government and will not be a loss to the country, the ships should be completed and the acute unemployment danger avoided, which can only result in extreme unrest and possibly the beginning of a bolshevik movement in the United States.

WAR COST $33,500,000,000.

Washington, Dec. 28.—It appears from figures compiled by the senate committee on appropriations that congress for the fiscal year 1918 and 1919 appropriated and authorized contract expenditures for the prosecution of the war with Germany aggregating some $55,000,000,000. Contract cancellations and various other deductions made possible by the armistice will bring the figures of actual expenditure by the United States on account of the war down to about $33,500,000,000.

This for two years is a sum ten times the money cost of the civil war to the northern states during four years, with a fourth of the present population of the United States. It is more than five times the cost of the Napoleonic wars to Great Britain, extending over a period of twenty years. It represents a cost per year more than double that incurred by Germany or any other chief belligerent in Europe. It is an amount exceeding the entire wealth of the nation as late as the year 1870.

So great a financial sacrifice for the time given has never at another period been made by any nation and has not been made by any other nation at this time. But it brought the war to a victorious end with a quickness which has dazed the whole world, and particularly the enemy world. That is and will continue to be the ample justification of so unprecedented an expenditure, no matter what time will reveal of the extravagance and waste necessarily attending the vast and improvised outpouring of the nation's substance.

GOVERNMENT INSURANCE.

Washington, Dec. 28.—Some time ago it was said that more than 90 per cent of our soldiers ha[illegible]emselves of government [illegible]. At that time the average [illegible]'s policy was written [illegible] before in the world's [illegible] have armies, so protected as America's, taken to the field.

There are really four separate, but corelated, acts in force. The first deals with a system of "allotments and allowances," by which the government and the fighting man share responsibility for the care of dependents. The second bill involves the payment by the government of compensation in the event a soldier is killed or disabled in the line of duty. The third measure is government insurance, to the maximum extent of $10,000, against death or total, permanent disability. The fourth provision involves a program of re-education and rehabilitation of disabled men.

There is another important provision. The insurance may be kept in force after the expiration of the war and changed to ordinary forms, including ordinary life, 20-payment life, and endowment. The insurance will remain government insurance and be non-subject to attachment by creditors.

TO CHECK EXTORTION.

New York, Dec. 28.—Charging that the stock of subsidiaries of the Interborough Consolidated corporation, which operates the greater part of the subway, elevated and surface car lines in the boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx, has been "watered" for many years by "circuitous corporate windings which would have turned the minotaur green with envy," District Attorney Edward Swann in a statement tonight bitterly opposed the corporation's application for permission to charge higher fares. He declared the application, which asks for seven cent fares and a three cent charge for transfers on surface lines in Manhattan, would net the corporation $20,000,000 a year.

LIVING COSTS $14.75 WEEK.

San Francisco, Dec. 28.—Mrs. Sarah Hagan, chairman of the United Garment Workers, appeared before the industrial welfare commission with documentary evidence to show that the cost of living of a single woman in these times, without putting anything aside for a rainy day, is $14.75 a week. Her list shows such items as wholesome food, substantial clothing, one picture show a week and 10 cents for church plate. The purpose of the meeting was the proposed readjustment of the wage schedule for women to fit post-war conditions. No decision was reached. Representatives of employers advocated a national wage scale in order that there might be no disadvantage suffered by any of the various States.

TO FORM MARINE COUNCIL.

New Orleans, Dec. 28.—Delegates from all the gulf states met here in convention to form a Gulf District Marine council of the various organized crafts engaged in building ships. Approximately 100 delegates, representing 40,000 men, were in attendance. A committee of three has been sent to Washington to perfect arrangements for obtaining the charter from the American Federation of Labor, and to look after other details incident to forming the organization.

$2 WAGE BOOST.

South Bend, Ind., Dec. 28.—A general wage increase of $2 a week has been secured by organized electrotypers.

NEW DIVISION FORMED TO PROMOTE BUILDING

Washington, Dec. 28.—A new division for the encouragement of building operations has been created by the labor department and will be in operation soon after the opening of the new year. Civic and trade associations throughout the nation have been flooding Washington with suggestions, and it is believed that the campaign to be launched will prove one of the greatest readjustment factors initiated by the administration.

Officials are unanimous in stating that the nation's prosperity is best reflected by new building operations.

The administration is solidly behind the plan and is mobilizing experts to carry out the program. It is said that whatever legislation is needed to bring about financial aid for interests who seek to build will be forthcoming.

In discussing the plan Frank Morrison, secretary of the American Federation of Labor, said:

"Unless the people of the United States awake to the necessity of at once encouraging building operations, we will have bread lines in our industrial centers before spring comes. Many men who plan new structures are holding back because of the difficulties of excavation processes in the winter months. They must be encouraged to take up the work at once.

"Certain it is that thousands of munitions workers are being thrown upon the labor market, and the young men from the army have reason to fear lest labor competition will bring about low wages and idleness such as the country has never known.

"What such a condition might lead to no one who has not seen Russia in her recent distress can imagine.

"The administration is wise in providing means for the encouragement of building. In 1914, when the war broke out hundreds of thousands became idle in the United States almost overnight. Then within a couple of months conditions were readjusted when the munition works began to call for labor. Now we are going back to the days of 1914, for the munition plants are closing.

"Peace times will bring privation to labor unless everything possible is done to encourage the investment of our huge resources in building and trade expansion programs."

TRIBUTE TO LABOR.

Washington, Dec. 28.—In the annual report of the secretary of the navy, the following tribute to the patriotic part that labor has played in the winning of the war finds prominent place:

"The relations between labor and the navy department have been highly satisfactory during the past year. In spite of the general bidding for skilled mechanics, the workmen in our navy yards, with few exceptions, have remained loyal to the department and have refused to accept more lucrative positions. On several occasions when the general relations appeared to have reached a critical stage, the various trades in our navy yards addressed resolutions to the secretary of the navy so clearly defining their belief that the duty of all loyal American workmen lay in securing the maximum production of war materials by combined individual efforts, without regard to selfish considerations of personal betterment, as to have no slight effect in bringing both sides in controversies to a realization of the need of forgetting their disputes and devoting their energies toward winning the war.

"Much of this satisfactory condition is due to the loyal co-operation of the heads of the American Federation of Labor, with whom the department has maintained the friendliest relations and whose wise and patriotic councils have done much to keep such yard workmen as were members of labor organizations keenly alive to a sense of their duty as American citizens."

IMPORTANT CONFERENCE.

Washington, Dec. 28.—The Farmers' Open Forum makes this announcement in its last issue:

"The Farmers' national headquarters announces a conference on economic reconstruction in America and international reconstruction, to be held under their auspices in the National hotel, Tuesday and Wednesday, January 7 and 8, 1919. This conference is to consider the various programs of reconstruction adopted by different farm organizations and to work out a joint farmers' program for domestic and international reconstruction. A number of farmer organizations, including State Granges, State Farmers' Unions, the American Society of Equity, and the Gleaners, have pledged their co-operation in this conference which will be the most important meeting of farmers ever held in this country because of the urgency and importance of the problems to be considered."

SPANISH WORKERS UNITING.

Oakland, Cal., Dec. 28.—As the result of an intensive campaign being carried on among the Spanish workers in the shipyards large numbers of them are becoming members of the Shipping Laborers' union. Heretofore these workers were apparently reluctant about accepting membership in unions.

PATTERN MAKERS' UNION.

Harrisburg, Pa., Dec. 28.—The pattern makers have finally succeeded in completing their union and electing a full set of officers. The work of securing the organization required continued close application and much effort on the part of representatives of that league.

WANT AN 8-HOUR DAY.

New Orleans, Dec. 28.—A new wage and working agreement has been presented to the employing bakers by representative of Bakery Workers' union No. 35. It calls for eight hours and time and half for overtime. As the trade is well organized little opposition is anticipated. The minimum wage is $22 and the maximum $28.

DEMAND AN INCREASE.

Pottsville, Pa., Dec. 28.—The United Brewery workers are demanding an increase of $1 a day. The request for the increase is the result of the brewery companies advancing the price of beer $4 a barrel. An offer of $2 a week was rejected by the workers.

NEW CO-OPERATIVE STORE.

Denison, Tex., Dec. 28.—The Co-operative Buyers Union store has opened for business. The stock of the new venture will be in the hands of members of the various unions. It starts with a capital of $20,000.